Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. Please amend claims 1, 9, 16, 29 and 36-38, and newly add claim 40 so that the current status of all claims is as follows:

Listing of Claims:

1.   (currently amended) A method of organizing a plurality of digital images including at least one image placeholder in a predetermined page format utilizing a software program embodied in a computer media, said program running on a computer, comprising the steps of:

grouping said plurality of images into a plurality of different page layouts wherein any one of said plurality of images ~~may be~~ is located in any position in said plurality of different page layouts, each of said page layouts ~~are~~ is capable of being printed; ~~and having white space between said plurality of images and said~~

providing at least one image placeholder into the plurality of different page layouts, said at least one image placeholder being void of ~~wherein~~ said plurality of images ~~are not placed in said placeholder,~~ wherein each of said page layouts having white space between said at least one image placeholder and said plurality of images;

analyzing each of said different page layouts and spatially balancing said white space between said plurality of digital images and said at least one image placeholder in accordance with the amount of white space in each of said plurality of different page layouts; and

selecting the page layout based on the amount of white space determined for each of said plurality of different page layouts and the spatial balance of said white space between said plurality of digital images.

2.   Cancelled.

3.   Cancelled.

4   (previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein said analyzing said different page layouts comprises scoring each of said different page layouts.

5.   (previously presented) The method according to claim 1 further comprising the step of further scaling the plurality of digital images of said selected page layout by different amounts.

6.   (previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein the amount of white space is minimized by using stochastic algorithms.

7.   (previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein said grouping of said plurality of digital images includes placing said plurality of digital images in said different page layouts in a non-overlapping pattern.

8.   Cancelled.

9.   (currently amended) The method according to claim 4 wherein said analyzing of said different page layouts comprises [[a]] an iteration of comparing sequentially two different page layouts and selecting the best page layout until little or no further improvement in scoring is obtained.

10.   (previously presented) The method according to claim 9 further comprising the step of scaling individual images of the page layout obtained after said iteration.

11.   (previously presented) The method according to claim 9 further comprising the step of rotating said plurality of digital images a predetermined amount.

12.   Cancelled.

13.   (previously presented) The method according to claim 1 further comprising the step of positioning said plurality of digital images in said selected page layout so as to provide a desired border on said page.

14.   (previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein said white space is determined vertically between adjacent images in said page layouts.

15   (previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein said white space is determined horizontally between adjacent images in said page layouts.

16.   (currently amended) A method of organizing a plurality of digital images in a predetermined page format including a background image utilizing a software program embodied in a computer media, said program running on a computer, comprising the steps of:

identifying an image to be used as a background image;

grouping said plurality of <u>digital</u> images into a plurality of different page layouts including said background image wherein any one of said plurality of images ~~may be~~ <u>is</u> located in any position in said plurality of different page layouts, each of said page layouts ~~are~~ <u>is</u> capable of being printed ~~and having white space between said plurality of digital images~~;

<u>providing at least one image placeholder in the plurality of different page layouts, said at least one image placeholder being void of said plurality of images including said background image, wherein each of said page layouts having white space between said at least one image placeholder and said plurality of images;</u>

analyzing each of said different page layouts in accordance with respect to the amount of said white space in each of said plurality of different page layouts and spatially balancing said white space between said plurality of digital images; and

selecting the page layout based on said amount of white space determined for each of said plurality of different page layouts and the spatial balance of said white space between said plurality of digital images.

17.   (previously presented) The method according to Claim 16 wherein said background image is displayed with at least one reduced characteristic.

18.   (previously presented) The method according to Claim 17 wherein said at least one reduced characteristic is color saturation.

19.   (previously presented) The method according to Claim 17 further including the step of:

identifying at least one image to be placed at a predetermined image location.

20.   Cancelled.

21.   Cancelled.

22.   (previously presented) The method according to claim 16 further comprising placing said plurality of digital images in said selected page layout.

23.   Cancelled.

24.   (previously presented) The method according to claim 16 wherein said analyzing said different page layouts comprises scoring each of said different page layouts.

25.   (previously presented) The method according to claim 16 further comprising the step of further scaling the images of said selected page layout by different amounts.

26.   (previously presented) The method according to claim 16 wherein the amount of said space is minimized by using stochastic algorithms.

27.   (previously presented) The method according to claim 16 wherein said grouping of said plurality of digital images in said different page layouts is done in a non-overlapping pattern.

28.   Cancelled.

29.   (currently amended) The method according to claim 16 wherein said analyzing of said different page layouts comprises [[a]] an iteration of comparing sequentially two different page layouts and selecting the best page layout until little or no further improvement in scoring is obtained.

30.   (previously presented) The method according to claim 29 further comprising the step of scaling individual images of the page layout obtained after said iteration.

31.   (previously presented) The method according to claim 29 further comprising the step of rotating said images a predetermined amount.

32.   Cancelled.

33.   (previously presented) The method according to claim 16 further comprising the step of positioning said images in said selected page layout so as to provide a desired border on said page.

34.   (previously presented) The method according to claim 16 wherein said white space is determined vertically between adjacent images in said page layouts.

35.   (previously presented) The method according to claim 16 wherein said white space is determined horizontally between adjacent images in said page layouts.

36.   (currently amended) A computer software product for organizing a plurality of images in a predetermined format comprising a computer readable storage medium having a computer program wherein any one of said plurality of images may be is located in any position in said plurality of different page layouts which when loaded into a computer causes the computer to perform the following steps:

grouping said plurality of images into a plurality of different page layouts.; wherein said plurality of images are not placed in a predefined area on said page each of said page layouts are is capable of being printed and having white space between said plurality of digital images and said predefined area;

providing at least one predetermined area into the plurality of different page layouts, said at least one predetermined area being void of said plurality of images, wherein each of said page layouts having white space between said at least one predetermined area and said plurality of images;

analyzing each of said different page layouts in accordance with respect to the amount of said white space in each of said plurality of different page layouts and spatially balanced said white space between said plurality of digital images and said predefined area; and

selecting the page layout based on said amount of white space determined for each of said plurality of different page layouts and the spatial balance of said white space between said plurality of digital images and said predefined area.

37.   (currently amended) A method of organizing a plurality of images in a predetermined page format utilizing a software program unning running on a computer, comprising the steps of:

providing a plurality of digital images;

providing at least one image placeholder being void of said plurality of digital images;

selecting a number of said images and said at least one image placeholder for placement on said predetermined page format;

grouping said plurality of images and said image placeholder being void of said plurality of digital images into a plurality of different page layouts each of said page layouts are is capable of being printed and having white space between said plurality of digital images and said at least one image placeholder wherein any one of said plurality of images may be is located in any position in said plurality of different page layouts [[r]];

analyzing each of said different page layouts in accordance with respect to the amount of white space in each of said plurality of different page layouts; and

selecting the page layout based on the amount of white space determined for each of said plurality of page layouts.

38. (currently amended) A method of organizing a first set of plurality of images and an image placeholder in a predetermined page format utilizing a software program running on a computer, comprising the steps of:

grouping said plurality of images and said image placeholder being void of said plurality of digital images into a plurality of different page layouts, wherein each of said page layouts having white space between said at least one image placeholder and said plurality of images and wherein any one of said plurality of images may be is located in any position in said plurality of different page layouts, each of said page layouts is capable of being printed;

analyzing each of said different page layouts in accordance with respect to the amount of white space in each of said plurality of different page layouts and spatially balanced said white space between said plurality of digital images and image placeholder;

selecting the page layout based on said the amount of white space determined for each of said plurality of different page layouts and spatially balanced said white space between said plurality of digital images and

storing said selected page layout for later use.

39. (previously presented) The method according to claim 38 wherein said stored page layout is used with a second plurality set of images.

40. (new) The method according to Claim 16 wherein said image placeholder allows viewing of an area of interest in the background.